



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Public Instruction  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

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\*\*\***NEWS RELEASE**\*\*\*

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CONTACT: Joseph Donovan, Communications Officer, (608) 516-9811 (cell)

## Andrea Payan receives \$25,000 Milken National Educator Award

*Payan among up to 100 K-12 educators across the country receiving 20th Anniversary Awards*

MADISON—Andrea Payan, recipient of a 2006 Milken National Educator Award, uses her passion for teaching to create a respectful classroom atmosphere in which all children learn.

She and her students share responsibility for creating an environment for learning. Payan's distinctive way of working with children, and in particular helping them develop responsible behavior, creates a family unit in which students take care of each other. An observer in Payan's classroom watched a reluctant learner receive encouragement when volunteering answers, although they were incorrect, with Payan telling her class, "This is how we learn, by taking chances, making guesses."

Payan wrote a grant to combine health, math, and science instruction through the use of pedometers. Students became more aware of good health habits and charted and graphed data on their walking, improving their exercise and relating the efforts to their math lessons. Another writing grant had students using computers to improve their writing skills. Payan adapts lessons so all students, even special education students, are included in the project, never allowing an, "I can't do it," attitude.

Students in Payan's classroom are always involved and have opportunities for hands-on experiences and scientific inquiry. Her classroom includes a writer's workshop and employs a variety of reading instructional strategies to maximize student success. Student math scores improved by 48 percent over the course of one semester. In writing and reading, 95 percent of Payan's students are at or above grade level.

Described as a "wonderful leader because she cares," Payan serves as a math teacher leader, conducting in-school inservice sessions for her colleagues. She also serves on the school's learning team and seeks out professional development to improve her classroom practice.

Payan began her professional life in engineering and entered teaching through alternative certification. She is in her sixth year of teaching. She is a fifth-grade bilingual teacher at Morgandale Elementary School, specializing in the teaching of reading, English, language arts, science, and mathematics. Payan will receive a \$25,000 unrestricted cash award as part of the 2006 Milken National Educator honor.

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